

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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P R 291527Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1671

INFO AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 0987

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, ZA

SUBJECT: COMMENTS ON GOVERNMENT RESHUFFLE

REF: LUSAKA 958

1. SUMMARY. GOVERNMENT AND PARTY CHANGES ANNOUNCED MAY 27
ARE FIRST MAJOR REORGANIZATION OF ZAMBIAN TOP LEADERSHIP
SINCE "SECOND REPUBLIC" ESTABLISHED DECEMBER 1973. WHILE
TIMING OF RESHUFFLE DICTATED BY DECISION OF PRIMIN
CHONA TO RESIGN, SOME OF CHANGES ANNOUNCED UNDERSTOOD
TO HAVE BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR SEVERAL
MONTHS. OTHERS APPEAR INTENDED TO DISCIPLINE WAYWARD
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LEADERS OR MERELY TO REAFFIRM PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY OVER
SQUABBLING PARTY AND GOVT OFFICIALS. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT

ALSO EXPRESSED NEED TO STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP, PRESUMABLY IN PREPARATION FOR "REVOLUTIONARY" INITIATIVES IN FOREIGN AND ECONOMIC POLICY WHICH HE HINTED WILL BE FORTHCOMING SOON. OUR INITIAL AND STILL HIGHLY TENTATIVE ASSESSMENT IS THAT NEW LINEUP MARGINALLY STRONGER THAN PREVIOUS ONE BUT NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT IN OUTLOOK OR CAPABILITY. END SUMMARY.

2. OUR INITIAL IMPRESSION, SUBJECT TO REVISION AS FURTHER INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE, IS THAT CABINET AND OTHER LEADERSHIP CHANGES ANNOUNCED MAY 27 REPRESENT LESS AN ORDERLY,

CAREFULLY PLANNED REALIGNMENT OF PERSONALITIES AND FUNCTIONS THAN SERIES OF MOVES TAKEN BY PRESIDENT TO DEAL WITH NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS. SOME CHANGES APPEAR INTENDED TO HAVE DISCIPLINARY OR CHASTENING EFFECT ON THOSE INVOLVED. PRESIDENTIAL PENCHANT FOR MANIPULATION OF HIS SUBORDINATES AND KEEPING THEM OFF BALANCE PROBABLY ALSO A FACTOR. EXCEPT FOR MINOR CABINET RESHUFFLE LAST JANUARY WHEN ANDREW KASHITA WAS DROPPED (LUSAKA 128), PRESENT LEADERSHIP LINEUP HAS SURVIVED ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED FOR ALMOST 18 MONTHS--SOMETHING OF A RECORD AND PROBABLY A REFLECTION MORE OF PRESIDENT'S PREOCCUPATION WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS THAN EVIDENCE OF HIS SATISFACTION WITH WAY SYSTEM HAS BEEN WORKING. SOME OF CHANGES UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE BEEN UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR MONTHS BUT WERE ANNOUNCED AT THIS TIME AS MATTER OF CONVENIENCE OR PERHAPS FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT. PRESIDENT OBVIOUSLY INTENDS RESHUFFLE TO CONVEY IMPRESSION OF NEW VIGOR AND DYNAMISM IN GOVERNMENT DESPITE FACT RELATIVELY FEW NEW FACES SEVOLVED.

3. MAINZA CHONA RESIGNATION. PRESIDENT'S EXPLANATION IS THAT CHONA ASKED TO BE RELIEVED BECAUSE HE UNABLE TO CONTINUE IN POST. PRESIDENT DID NOT SAY WHY AND PROFESSED NOT TO UNDERSTAND DECISION. CHONA HIMSELF LATER TOLD PRESS HE QUIT FOR HEALTH REASONS. HOWEVER, CHONA UNDERSTOOD TO HAVE LONG BEEN UNHAPPY IN POST WHERE HE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR GOVERNMENT DECISIONS BUT WHERE REAL POWER LAY ELSEWHERE. HE WAS NOT MEMBER OF PRESIDENT'S INNER CIRCLE AND KAUNDA IGNORED HIM IN FORMULATING KEY DECISIONS ON DEFENSE, SECURITY AND FOREIGN
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AFFAIRS. MOREOVER, CHONA WHO HAD BEEN VP 1970-73 CHAFFED AT OCCUPYING NO. 3 SPOT BEHIND PARTY SEC GEN GRAY ZULU. PRESIDENT WAS AT PAINS TO EXPRESS HIS SADNESS AT DEPARTURE THIS LONG-TIME COLLEAGUE. REAPPOINTMENT OF CHONA TO CABINET AS ATTORNEY GENERAL COULD REFLECT PRESIDENT'S OSTENSIBLE DESIRE NOT TO MAKE USE OF HIS EXPERIENCE AND LEGAL BACKGROUND. WE SUSPECT CHONA MAY HAVE HOPED TO RECEIVE JUDICIAL APPOINTMENT, PERHAPS TO CHIEF JUSTICESHIP WHICH WENT INSTEAD TO ANNE SILUNGWE. CHONA'S NEW JOB THEREFORE REPRESENTS DEMOTION AND RECALLS 1970 DOWNGRADING OF VICE PRESIDENT SIMON

KAPWEPWE TO CABINET POST FROM WHICH HE LATER RESIGNED TO GO INTO OPPOSITION TO KAUNDA AND UNIP. PROBABLY WITH THIS PRECEDENT IN MIND, CHONA ANNOUNCED MAY 27 THAT DIVISIONISTS IN PARTY OR NATION WILL BE DISAPPOINTED IF THEY EXPECTED HIM TO JOIN THEM. GOVT-OWNED DAILY MAIL HAS ALSO ECHOED THIS THEME, LAUDING OUTGOING PRIMIN FOR HIS UNSELFISHNESS AND LOYALTY TO KAUNDA AND UNIP.

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4. NEW PRIME MINISTER. ELIJAH MUDENDA IS SEASONED AND INTELLIGENT FIGURE WHO HAS HELD VARIETY OF CABINET AND PARTY POSTS. FROM 1970-73 HE WAS FOREIGN MINISTER BEFORE ACCEPTING NOMINATION TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE WHERE HE HAS BEEN CHAIRMAN OF SUBCOMMITTEE ON POLITICAL, LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS. MUDENDA IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE STRONGER AND MORE ABLE LEADERSHIP TO CABINET THAT DID CHONA. HIS BACKGROUND IN AGRICULTURE AND IN FINANCE (HE HAS HELD BOTH

PORTFOLIOS) SHOULD BE ASSET IN GOVT'S CURRENT EFFORTS TO PROMOTE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WHILE CONFRONTING ZAMBIA'S GROWING BALANCE OF PAYMENTS DIFFICULTIES. IF PRESIDENT KAUNDA WERE REALLY SERIOUS LAST NOVEMBER WHEN HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT MOST PROBLEMS WOULD HENCEFORTH BE DEALT WITH AT CIWINET LEVEL THUS GIVING HIM THE TIME TO THINK AND ENGAGE IN LONG-RANGE PLANNING, CHOICE
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OF MUDENDA AS PRIMIN SEEMS GOOD START IN THAT DIRECTION.

5. FOREIGN MINISTRY. WE SUSPECT VERNON MWAANGA KICKED UPSTAIRS TO CENTRAL COMMITTEE NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE PRESIDENT DISPLEASED WITH HIS HANDLING OF FOREIGN POLICY BUT IN ORDER TO CHASTEN YOUNG MAN WHOSE SWINGING PRIVATE LIFE AND REPUTED PRESIDENTIAL AMBITIONS HAD UNDOUBTEDLY COME TO STATE HOUSE NOTICE. ON CENTRAL COMMITTEE, MWAANGA WILL BE OUT OF LIMELIGHT WHILE

HE DEVOTES HIMSELF TO ZAMBIA'S RURAL PROBLEMS AND, PRESUMABLY, LEARNS HUMILITY. HIS SUCCESSOR, RUPIAH BANDA, IS CONFIDENT, OUTGOING, AND EXPERIENCED DIPLOMAT WELL-KNOWN TO DEPT FROM HIS SERVICE AS AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON AND AT UN. BANDA HAS IN PAST EXPRESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH NOTORIOUSLY INEFFICIENT ZAMBIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND IT IS HOPED HE CAN MAKE SOME MUCH NEEDED IMPROVEMENTS THERE. IN HIS MAY 27 STATEMENT PRESIDENT EMPHASIZED INTENT TO STRENGTHEN DIPLOMATIC SERVICES, BOTH TO STAFF NEW EMBASSIES BEING OPENED AND TO LAUNCH WHAT PRESIDENT CALLED "REVOLUTIONARY FOREIGN POLICY" DESIGNED TO ENHANCE UNDERSTANDING OF ZAMBIA'S POSITION ABROAD. PRESIDENT DECLINED PRESS REQUEST TO ELABORATE ON WHAT DIRECTION FOREIGN POLICY "REVOLUTION" WILL TAKE BUT WE BELIEVE IT MAY BE INTENDED IN PART TO COUNTER CRITICISMS OF ZAMBIA'S SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLICY AND DETENTION OF EX-ZANU FREEDOM FIGHTERS IMPLICATED IN CHITEPO AND OTHER MURDERS. NINE NEW AMBASSADORS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED (ALTHOUGH THEIR POSTS NOT YET ANNOUNCED) AND RECALL OF HICOM NGONDA FROM LONDON TO BECOME PERMSEC AT FONMIN SUGGEST THAT EXTENSIVE RESHUFFLING OF AMBASSADORS MAY BE PENDING.

6. OTHER CABINET CHANGES. ALL PROVINCIAL CABINET MINISTERS HAVE BEEN RESHUFFLED. PERHAPS IN REACTION TO DISCOVERY THAT

ONE, AMOCK PHIRI, HAD FAILED REPORT ALL HIS OUTSIDE ASSETS AS REQUIRED BY LEADERSHIP CODE (LUSAKA 966), RESHUFFLE INTENDED DISCOURAGE OTHERS FROM DEVELOPING VESTED INTERESTS IN AREAS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY. TWO, AXON CHALIKULIMA AND BASIL KABWE, HAVE BEEN TRANSFERRED TO FOREIGN SERVICE, PRESIDENT STRESSED THAT REMOVAL OF CONTROVERSIAL CHALIKULIMA FROM KEY COPPERBELT POST HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR SOME MONTHS AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS REACTION TO RECENT PUBLIC ROW BETWEEN HIM AND LAMBA TRIBAL CHIEFS. NOTEWORTHY THAT

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WITH EXCEPTION MWAANGA AND SILUNGWE, NO FUNCTIONAL MINISTERS WERE CHANGED, DESPITE PERSISTENT RUMORS THAT FINANCE MINISTER CHIKWANDA AND COMMERCE MINISTER RAJAH KUNDA WERE ON SKIDS.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS. AS INDICATED ABOVE, WE BELIEVE RESHUFFLE INTENDED PRIMARILY TO REWARD OR TO ADMONISH PARTICULAR INDIVIDUALS AND TO DEAL WITH JOB REALIGNMENTS NECESSITATED BY RESIGNATIONS OF CHONA AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER MUTTI. POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF THESE MOVES NOT READILY APPARENT. HOWEVER, PRESIDENT SOUGHT GIVE IMPRESSION THAT RESHUFFLE RELATED TO MAJOR AND PRESUMABLY RADICAL NEW POLICY INITIATIVES TOBE ANNOUNCED AT UNIP NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING IN LATE JUNE. KAUNDA GAVE FEW CLUES OTHER THAN TO INDICATE NEW RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATE ENTERPRISE WOULD BE INTRODUCED AND THAT THOROUGH OVERHAUL AND "ZAMBIANIZATION" OF LEGAL COURT AND JUDICAL BRANCH

WILL BE UNDERTAKEN. MUDENDA LIKELY BE MORE ABLE THAN OUTGOING PRIMIN CHONA IN COORDINATING AND IMPLEMENTING INITIATIVES IN THESE DIRECTIONS BUT OTHERWISE NEW LINEUP NOT SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT OR MORE RADICAL IN MAKEUP THAN WAS PREVIOUS CABINET. THERE ARE FEW NEW FACES AND MOST OF THESE ARE AT SUB-CABINET LEVEL.
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